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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/781,088

02/17/2004

Robert J. Simmons

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7590

08/20/2008

ROBERT D. VARITZ, P.C.
4915 SE 33RD PLACE
PORTLAND, OR 97202

EXAMINER

WENDELL, MARK R

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3635

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

08/20/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/781,088	Applicant(s) SIMMONS, ROBERT J.	
	Examiner MARK R. WENDELL	Art Unit 3635	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 May 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 3-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Greer et al. (US 5784843) in view of Forslund, III et al. (US 5794392). Regarding claims 1 and 6, Greer teaches a utility-conduit containment space originating from under the floor. The utilities run through pre-fabricated furniture within the room space and into utilities-conduits within the ceiling of the particular story. The utilities-conduit spaces within the floor and ceiling are less than the normal full-plate height of the individual story. The utility-conduit structure supplies utilities upward. Forslund illustrates in Figures 1 and 2 the utility lines running under the floor and up a beam, similar to that of Greer. Neither reference distinctly discloses the office building being multi-storied. However, the Figures imply, and it is well known that most office buildings are multi-storied and have the utility lines running within conduits in the ceiling or under the floor between stories. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify Greer in view of Forslund to include multiple stories incorporating the utilities-conduit structure of the combined references.

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Regarding claim 3, neither reference distinctly discloses the lower story to be a ground level story; however it would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have the lower story at ground level in order for easy access into the building. It is well known in the art that buildings without a basement or concourse level have their lowest story at ground level.

Regarding claim 4, the further limiting factor of the claim “adapted for connection to related utilities services supplies which are external to the building structure... story” is not distinctly disclosed within the cited references. However, the utilities mentioned in Greer that lie within the utility conduit space are electricity, sprinklers, and plumbing, amongst others. These utilities inherently need an external connection to the utility company provider, so therefore the utility containment space would inherently have to have supply input portions adapted for connection to external services.

Regarding claims 5 and 7, Forslund discloses in column 8, lines 32-40 the floor pans being constructed from metal or molded plastic which is impervious and therefore would prevent any liquid drainage to an underlying floor.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 5/16/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The examiner disagrees with the argument that a raised floor or a dropped ceiling does is considered part of the full plate height. Applicant has defined a full plate

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height as “that vertical dimension in the space which extends **from a floor plane to a ceiling plane.**” In a dropped ceiling construction the full plate height, using applicant’s definition, would be from the floor to the ceiling tile (which would be the ceiling plane).

The utility space above the ceiling tiles would not be considered to be part of the full plate height **by applicant’s definition.** The utility space would have its own plate height, which in the case of Forslund in view of Greer is much smaller than the full plate height. The same is the case for a raised floor. The full plate height of a room with a raised floor is from the raised floor tile (floor plane) to the ceiling. The utility area beneath the floor (like that in Forslund) is considered to have its own plate height, again by applicant’s definition.

Regarding the applicant’s argument:

“There is no teaching in '392 that the floor pans are sealed to one another to be water-impervious. The cited portion of '843 suggest otherwise, in that the floor pans are stated to be conformal to an uneven floor, suggesting that the edges thereof are not fixed to one another.”

The examiner fails to see the reasoning that because the pans “conform” to an uneven floor that makes them not fixed together. Contrary to that thought, column 8 and Figure 3 further states that the floor pans are connected via connector bridges, 29. All portions are said to be made of either metal or molded plastic which are water impervious. The Figures show all portions of the pans and connector bridges closely and tightly connected.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The examiner would like to note that the previously presented Non-Patent Literature (wikipedia article regarding mechanical floors) states that older, well-known plural-story buildings such as the Sears Tower and the old World Trade Center Towers were constructed with mechanical floors strategically placed throughout the height of the building. These floors were placed in between other, usable floors and housed plumbing, electrical and other communication equipment (which all classify as utilities). In specific, the Petronas Towers has a mechanical floor on the second floor making the floor below it a ground floor. However, the floor in which the utility floor is placed is not a patentable feature; it would be obvious to place the utility floor between any two floors. The claims also read upon drop ceilings and raised floors which house utilities, which are both well known within the building construction art.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MARK R. WENDELL whose telephone number is (571)270-3245. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 7:30AM-5PM, Alt. Fri off, EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Chilcot can be reached on (571) 272-6777. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Richard E. Chilcot, Jr./
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3635

/M. R. W./
Examiner, Art Unit 3635
August 12, 2008